

Remarks

Claims 1-20 are pending for the Examiner's consideration, including amended claims 1, 10, 11, 13, and 14 and new claims 18-20. No new matter is believed to have been added.

Applicant appreciates the indication in the Office Action that claims 1-9 would be allowable if rewritten or amended to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph as set forth in the Office Action. This rejection stated that there was insufficient antecedent basis for "the water" in claim 1, line 1 and there was insufficient antecedent basis for "the feedwater inlet" and "the feedwater outlet" in claim 13, line 3. In response, claim 1 has been amended to recite --water-- in claim 1, line 1 and to recite --a feedwater inlet-- and --a feedwater outlet-- in claim 13, line 3. Thus, it is believed that the rejection has been overcome.

Applicant also appreciates the indication in the Office Action that claims 11, 14, and 15 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In response, claims 11 and 14 have been rewritten in independent form incorporating originally presented claim 10.

In the Office Action, the drawings were objected to because of "reference character(s) not mentioned in the description." With respect to an extra "1" or "I" near reference no. 5 in Fig. 1, the reference character 1 has been deleted from the figure. Replacement and Annotated Sheets are attached for Fig. 1. With respect to reference characters 44 and 45, the specification has been amended on page 14, after line 7, to include a "List of Designations" that includes reference characters 44 and 45. Support for this amendment and list of designations can be found in priority International Patent Application PCT/IB02/03570 at pages 14-15, which was incorporated in the present application by reference, as well as in the priority Swiss Patent Application No. 01701/01 at pages 15-16. No new matter is believed to have been added.

In the Office Action, claims 10, 12, 13, 16, and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,201,366 to Blangetti *et al.* ("Blangetti"). Claims 10, 12, 16, and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being

anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 2,677,433 to Kretzschmar ("Kretzschmar"). In addition, claims 10, 12, 16, and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,534,774 to Lecoffre *et al.* ("Lecoffre"). The rejections respectfully are overcome.

Independent claim 10, as amended, is directed to a device for thermally degassing water in a water-steam cycle, the water-steam cycle including a water volume and a steam volume, the device comprising: means for extracting water from the water volume; means for extracting steam from the steam volume; means for admixing said water with said steam to form a two-phase mixture; means for feeding the resulting two-phase mixture into the water volume; and a vessel with a plurality of nozzles arranged in a lower part of the vessel for introducing the two-phase mixture into the water volume.

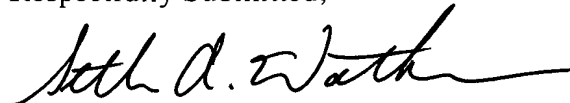
Neither Blangetti, Kretzschmar, nor Lecoffre disclose the invention of amended independent claim 10 with a two-phase mixture. As understood, Blangetti and Kretzschmar only mention the introduction of steam (see, e.g., Blangetti, column 6, line 48; Kretzschmar, column 3, line 11). Lecoffre does not relate to the claimed method involving a two-phase mixture. Thus, Applicant believes that claims 10, 12, 13, 16 and 17 are allowable.

In view of the foregoing, it is believed that all the pending claims are in condition for allowance, which is respectfully requested. If the Examiner does not agree, then a personal or telephonic interview is respectfully requested to discuss any remaining issues so as to expedite the eventual allowance of the claims.

A Petition for Extension of Time is submitted concurrently herewith along with a Fee Transmittal Sheet for the presentation of new claims. Should any additional fees be required, please charge such fees to Steptoe & Johnson LLP Deposit Account No. 19-4293.

Date: December 22, 2005

Respectfully Submitted,



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Enclosures

IN THE DRAWINGS

A “REPLACEMENT SHEET” for FIG. 1 is attached with an inadvertent extra reference numeral 1 deleted therefrom.

An “ANNOTATED SHEET” for FIG. 1 also is attached showing where the above-identified change has been made.

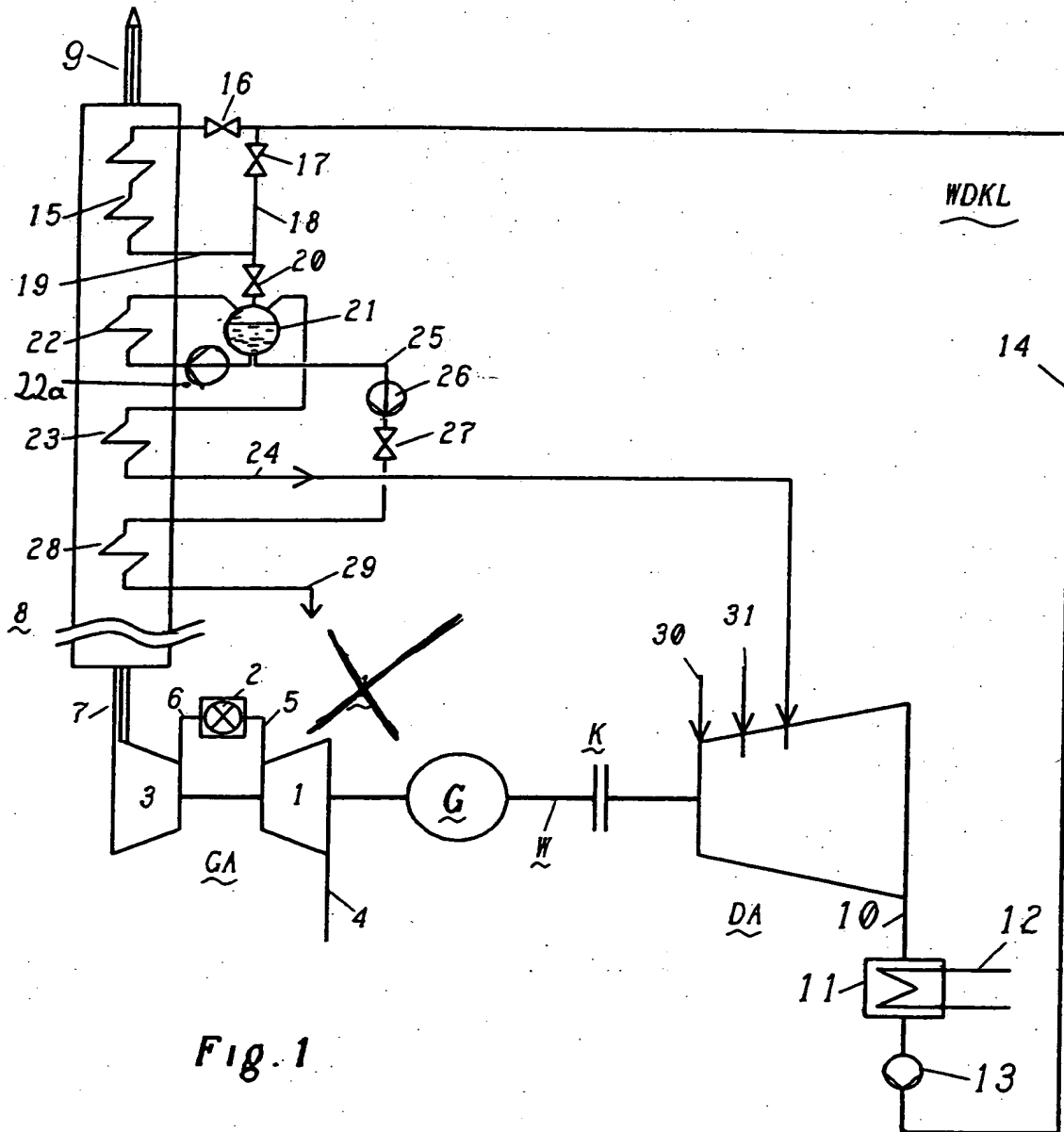
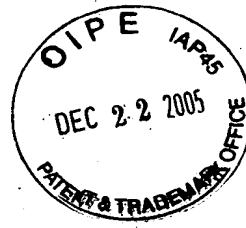


Fig. 1